

Memorandum

To: Chairman and Commissioners

Date: June 2, 2000

From: Robert I. Remen

Book Item 2.2a
ACTION

Ref: **Notices of Preparation of Environmental Impact Reports (EIR) – EIRs for San Fernando Valley East-West Transit Corridor and Mid-City/Westside Transit Corridor**

Issue:

Should the Commission comment on the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (MTA) Notice of Preparation for:

- an environmental impact report/statement (EIR/S) on the San Fernando Valley East-West Transit Corridor, and
- a supplemental environmental impact report/statement (SEIR/S) on the Mid-City/Westside Corridor?

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Commission direct staff to prepare a letter requesting MTA to:

- include in its environmental scoping of the two transit corridors an assessment of the alternatives to determine which one provides the most benefit for the projected life cycle cost. MTA should determine the estimated capital cost to construct each alternative, as well as the cost of operating and maintaining each of the alternatives.
- address how the alternatives impact its ability to operate and fund the existing rail/bus system.

Background:

Responsible agencies, such as the Commission, can help focus the lead agency's scope and content regarding the information needed, during the environmental process, that is germane to the agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. The Commission, as a responsible agency, may program and allocate funds for the two proposed projects, regardless of the alternative selected.

San Fernando Valley East-West Transit Corridor: In 1990 and 1992, MTA completed an EIR and SEIR for the corridor. In 1990, the existing right-of-way, known as the Pacific Burbank Branch, was purchased from Southern Pacific. The environmental process was suspended in 1998, due to MTA's institutional financial problems (insufficient revenues to cover its expenditures, such as operations and rail projects). The present EIR/S will review alternatives to the suspended subway extension.

The project is located in Los Angeles in the San Fernando Valley. It begins at Lankershim Boulevard and Chandler Boulevard at the terminus of the North Hollywood Red Line extension and goes west across the length of the San Fernando Valley to the vicinity of the Warner Center Transit Hub (see map).

The alternatives being considered on the San Fernando Valley East-West Transit Corridor are:

- bus rapid transit (BRT) – total estimated capital cost – \$80 to \$214 million.
- transportation systems management – total estimated capital cost – \$95 million
- no project.

Annual operating costs range between \$38 million (TSM) and \$48 million (BRT alternative).

Bus Rapid Transit Alternative – Buses would run along an exclusive roadway built on the SP Burbank/Chandler right-of-way, now owned by MTA, between the North Hollywood Metro Red Line station and the Warner Center Transit Center. Stations would be located approximately every mile along the 14-mile route, at major cross streets and trip destinations. Buses would be given priority at signals. Headways within the busway would vary between 2½ and 5 minutes during peak periods.

The corridor is being considered in two phases. If funding were limited, an initial phase between Woodman Avenue and Balboa Boulevard would be constructed first as a minimum operable segment. The first phase would include 5 stations.

TSM Alternative – This alternative would not require major capital investment, but would focus on maximizing the efficiency of the existing system, as well as expanding and improving the existing bus system.

Mid-City/Westside Transit Corridor: MTA, the local lead agency, and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), as the federal lead agency, are preparing a joint Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Supplemental Environmental Impact Report on proposed transit improvements on the Mid-City/Westside Transit Corridor. The original final SEIS/SEIR was adopted in August 1992 and resulted in a record of decision on the “MOS-3 Mid-City Extension. The Mid-City Extension was suspended in January 1998, due to MTA’s overall financial problems. The present SEIS/SEIR will review alternatives to the suspended subway extension.

The Mid-City/Westside Transit Corridor is located in Los Angeles County and traverses the cities of Los Angeles, Culver City, Beverly Hills and Santa Monica (see map). The alternatives being considered in the Mid-City/Westside Transit Corridor are:

- bus rapid transit (BRT) – total estimated capital cost – \$188 million
- light rail transit (LRT) – total estimated capital cost – \$589 million
- transportation systems management (TSM) – total estimated capital cost – \$92 million
- no project.

Annual operating costs range from:

- \$24 million (TSM alternative),
- \$32 to \$41 million (BRT alternative), and
- \$45 million (LRT alternative).

BRT Alternative 1 – Wilshire Boulevard Bus Rapid Transit – Buses would run in a dedicated lane adjacent to or within the center median of Wilshire Boulevard between the current Metro Red Line station at Wilshire/Vermont and downtown Santa Monica. Stations would be located approximately every mile along the 14-mile route. Buses would have priority at signals. Headways within the busway would be approximately every 3 minutes during peak periods, and the existing bus network would be integrated with the busway. Existing local bus service along Wilshire would be maintained.

BRT Alternative 2 – Exposition Right-of-Way Bus Rapid Transit – This alternative would connect downtown Los Angeles to downtown Santa Monica generally using a 16.8-mile BRT system along the Exposition right-of-way, currently owned by MTA. The BRT would operate on city streets, between downtown Los Angeles and Figueroa Street/Exposition Boulevard, following Flower Street (southbound) and Figueroa Street (northbound). The alignment would then turn west onto Exposition Boulevard and proceed on the Exposition right-of-way to Robertson Boulevard where it would then go west on Venice Boulevard to Sepulveda Boulevard, then proceeding north to return to the Exposition right-of-way. West of Olympic Boulevard, the BRT alignment would operate on local streets. The route would terminate near the new transit mall in Santa Monica on Broadway and Santa Monica Boulevards.

Light Rail Transit Alternative – Exposition Right-of-Way – This 16.3-mile alternative would connect downtown Los Angeles to downtown Santa Monica generally using the same route as the BRT Exposition right-of-way alternative. The line would end at a terminal station near Ocean Avenue.

TSM Alternative – This alternative would make modifications to transit service intended to enhance the performance and increase efficiency of the transportation system.

Attachments: Maps (2)

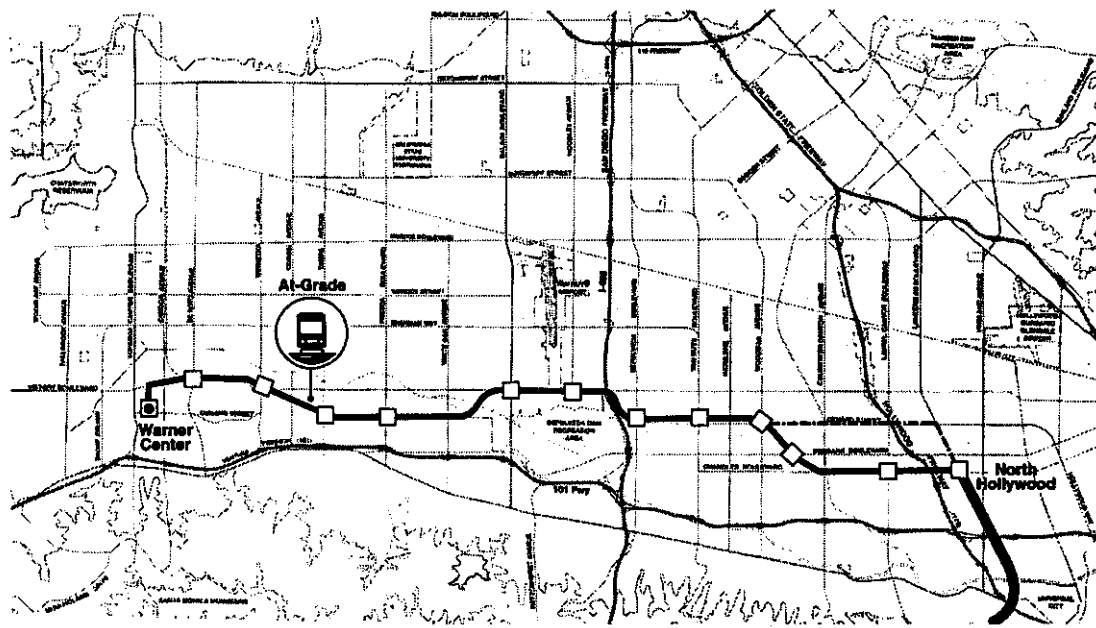


Figure 1: San Fernando Valley
East-West Corridor
Bus Rapid Transit

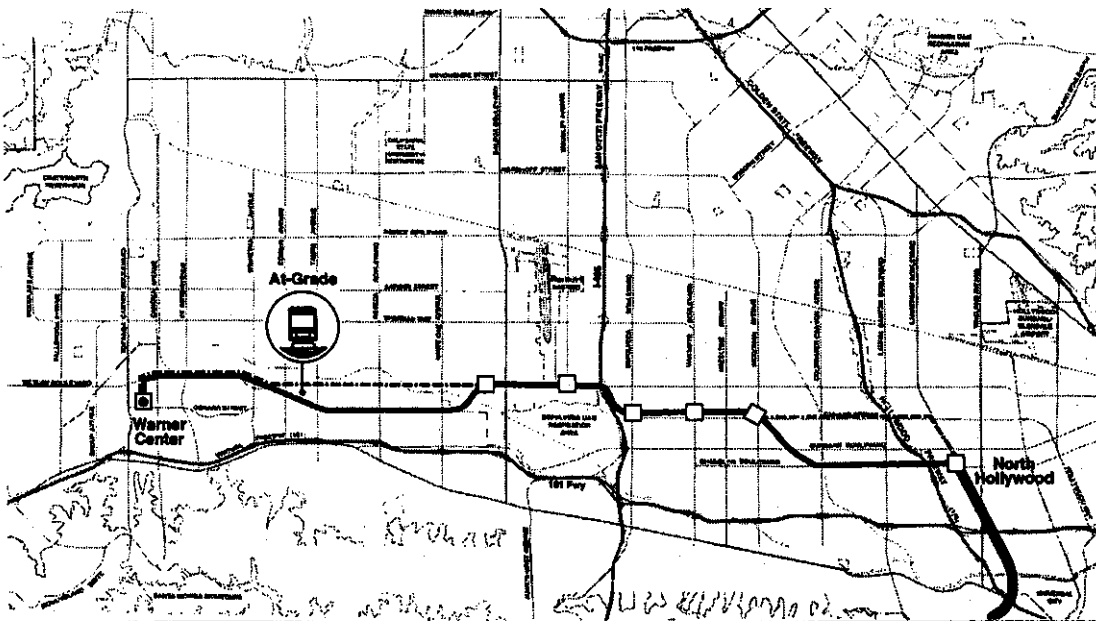


Figure 2: San Fernando Valley
East-West Transit Corridor
Busway Minimum Operating Segment



LEGEND

• Warner Center
Transit Hub

□ Station

Initial Phase

On-Street

Metro Red Line
Segment 3

Later Phases

